

SRC Key Initiatives

Getting Washington Back to Work

Final 2004



Higher Education

“Funding constraints, enrollment crunches and continuously declining resources combine to create real obstacles for colleges and universities throughout the state. Within these challenges lie genuine opportunities.”

Washington’s higher education system in recent years has felt pressure from two directions. First, the state’s unstable revenue situation has resulted in a state spending reduction for public colleges and universities. Tuition rates have risen sharply to make up the difference, making it harder for students and their families to afford the cost of a higher education. Second, Washington’s sluggish economy has pushed more students to return to school. This, combined with the expected arrival of the “baby boom echo” in a few years, will mean a very high demand for higher education enrollment slots.

Senate Republicans helped address Washington’s higher education challenges by passing a supplemental operating budget that funds about 3,000 enrollment slots for general use and in high-demand fields. The budget also helps students afford to go to college by increasing funding for the State Need Grant program by nearly \$4.5 million and increasing the Promise Scholarship funding by \$2.3 million.

Several bills passed this year dealing with higher education issues including strengthening links between the state’s K-12 and higher education systems, improving the transfer between two-year and four-year schools, expanding the role of branch campuses, and restating the HEC Board’s overall purpose and revising its major policy functions.

2004 Supplemental Operating Budget

Enrollment increases: The 2004 supplemental operating budget provided \$17 million in immediate funding – or about 3,000 new general and high-demand enrollments.

There is a \$10.1 million funding increase for general enrollments. The specific general enrollment slots are as follows:

- University of Washington: 338
- Washington State University: 191
- Western Washington University: 108
- Eastern Washington University: 78
- Central Washington University: 75
- The Evergreen State College: 37
- Community and technical colleges: 1,223

There is a \$7.2 million increase for enrollments in high-demand fields, providing an additional 858 FTE slots. The HEC Board will award 324 high-demand enrollment slots to public four-year and private independent institutions. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges will award 534 slots in high-demand fields.

State Need Grant: \$4.5 million in funding is provided to 1) cover the impact of new state-funded, high-demand FTE enrollments, and 2) to cover a shortfall in the State Need Grant for funded enrollments. The effective income cutoff for need grants is maintained at 55 percent of the state's median family income, currently \$36,500 for a family of four.

Promise Scholarships: The supplemental budget provides \$2.3 million to restore the average grant award amount for the Promise Scholarship program to about 51 percent of community college tuition and fees.

Other higher education spending items:

\$1.3 million for personnel and equipment at the UW Proteomics Center at its Lake Union Campus. Proteomics is the study of proteins and is the successor to the Human Genome Project.

\$680,000 in one-time funding to establish the UW-Tacoma Autism Center. The center will provide early diagnosis and intervention for services for children with autism. The new facility will serve as a satellite for the Autism Center at the UW Medical Center in Seattle and will provide clinical service and professional training.

\$300,000 in one-time funding to address the need for remedial math courses at colleges and universities. The funding will be used for a joint project involving representatives from the state's K-12 education system, the community and technical college system and the state's public four-year institutions.

\$270,000 to restore 50 state-funded enrollment slots at Central Washington University that were reduced from the budget in 2001.

\$100,000 for the HEC Board to make an evaluation of the state's expected higher education enrollment growth over the next few years so the Legislature can make a more informed decision as it decides how much to spend on higher education enrollments in the 2005-07 operating budget.

\$60,000 for Washington Center Scholarships, in which 15 Washington college students will each receive a \$4,000 scholarship to take part in full-time, semester-long internships in Washington, D.C.

Studying state's remedial education system (SSB 5139)

This measure requires the HEC Board, OSPI and the SBCTC to convene a work group to address the high participation rate in remedial education courses at colleges by recent high school graduates. In the 2003 fiscal year, it cost the state \$17.3 million for the remedial classes, which means the state is paying this amount to teach certain subjects to students twice. About 57 percent (18,022) of Washington's 2002 high school graduates who enrolled immediately in a community or technical college in 2002-03 had to enroll in one or more remedial classes in their first year of attending a college. An additional 11,675 high school graduates from the class of 2002 enrolled in a two-year school within one or two years after graduation. More than one-third of these students had to take a remedial class.

Testified For: OSPI, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

Testified Against: none

Status: Signed into law

Requiring annual meetings to focus on implementing cross-sector education policies (SSB 5677)

This measure requires the following groups to hold an annual meeting to discuss issues involving both K-12 and higher education: State Board of Education, HEC Board, OSPI, SBCTC, Council of Presidents, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, and legislators. K-12 and higher education boards used to hold these summit meetings in the 1990s, but they don't anymore. This has resulted in a lack of communication between the different boards. Holding an annual meeting should improve articulation between the K-12 and higher education systems.

Testified For: *Council of Presidents, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, State Board of Education*

Testified Against: *none*

Status: *Vetoed*

Vero Message: “Current law and other bills passed by the Legislature in the 2004 session duplicate the requirements of this bill. (See RCW 28A.305.285; Substitute House Bill No. 2382; Substitute Senate Bill No. 5139; Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2459, Section 602 (15); and Substitute House Bill 3103.”

Concerning residency status of military dependents (SB 6164)

This measure provides continued eligibility for in-state college tuition for the spouse and dependents of persons on active military duty who are re-assigned outside Washington. Under state law, Washington National Guard members and persons on active military duty stationed in Washington are eligible for in-state tuition rates. Spouses and dependents of persons on active military duty also are eligible for in-state rates. However, they are no longer eligible if the person on active duty is reassigned outside Washington. There currently are 12,000 military personnel from Fort Lewis who are deployed outside Washington.

Testified For: *McChord Air Force Base, Fort Lewis, governor’s office*

Testified Against: *none*

Status: *Signed into law*

Protecting tuition and fee payments by student called to active duty (SSB 6302)

This measure permits students to withdraw with a refund of tuition and fees; take an incomplete for a course and complete it on return; or complete the course with a grade and no penalty for missed classes as long as the instructor believes sufficient coursework has been completed.

Testified For: *Washington Military Department*

Testified Against: *none*

Status: *Signed into law*

Providing instructional materials for students with disabilities at public and private colleges and universities (SSB 6501)

This measure requires publishers to provide college instructional materials in an alternative format if requested by a public or private college or university so students with disabilities are accommodated. State and federal law requires colleges and universities to ensure equal access for students with disabilities.

Converting textbooks is a huge , time-consuming job for schools. This bill will reduce costs for colleges and universities.

Testified For: SBCTC, UW SFR, Centralia College

Testified Against: none

Status: Signed into law

Strengthening links between K-12 and higher education systems (SB 6561)

This measure directs certain education and higher education agencies to expand, strengthen and create high school/college enrollment dual programs on high school campuses. Creating more college classes in high school will help overcome scheduling problems that students face with Running Start.

Testified For: HEC Board, State Board of Education, OSPI, Council of Presidents, SBCTC, Association of School Principals, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

Testified Against: none

Status: Vetoed

Veto Message: “I strongly agree with the intent of this bill. However, Substitute House Bill No. 3103 provides ample direction to the appropriate state boards and agencies with regard to expanding dual enrollment options for students.”

Ensuring the quality of degree-granting institutions (ESHB 2381)

This measure permits the HEC Board to require private degree-granting institutions to be accredited or progressing toward accreditation for them to be authorized in our state. The HEC Board must develop consumer protection information regarding unauthorized and substandard degree-granting institutions. Institutions that previously had been exempted from degree-granting rules must be reviewed.

There is concern about some degree-institutions that act as little more than “diploma mills” instead of providing a quality education for students. Private or out-of-state colleges or universities can’t grant or offer to grant a degree in Washington unless it’s authorized by the HEC Board. The HEC Board establishes minimum standards and steps necessary to protect against fraudulent or deceptive practices by a degree-granting institution. However, it is outside the HEC Board’s jurisdiction to enforce these standards against unauthorized Internet-based institutions that offer degrees with little or no college-level work needed.

Testified For: HEC Board

Testified Against: none

Status: Signed into law

Note: An amendment mirroring **SB 6165**, allowing Promise Scholarships to be used at Oregon and Idaho colleges for students with special needs who need to be close to home, was added to ESHB 2381.

Improving transfer process between community colleges and four-year institutions (SHB 2382)

This measure requires the HEC Board to take certain steps to improve the transfer process between community colleges and four-year institutions. The measure will assure students and their parents that credits for courses at community colleges will be transferred.

Testified For: Intercollegiate Relations Commission, Washington Student Lobby, HEC Board, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Council of Faculty Representatives **With Concerns:** Council of Presidents, SBCTC, WSU, UW, Independent Colleges of Washington

Testified Against: The Evergreen State College

Status: Signed into law

Expanding role of university branch campuses (SHB 2707)

The bill declares the primary mission of branch campuses is to provide access to upper division and graduate level courses, but recognizes other educational objectives to respond to regional needs. It permits branch campuses to propose legislation authorizing practice-oriented or professional doctoral programs, and it no longer designates WSU Spokane as a branch campus. The bill directs each branch campus to make a recommendation on its future mission and how it will evolve. The recommendation must be given to the HEC Board by Nov. 15, 2004.

Testified For: Cascadia Community College **With Concerns:** UW, SBCTC, HEC Board

Testified Against: WSU, WSU Vancouver, UW Advisory Board

Status: Signed into law

Creating conditional scholarships for prospective teachers (SHB 2708)

The future teachers conditional scholarship program currently run by the HEC Board is amended to include a priority for potential teachers in math, science, technology or special education. A loan repayment option is established where federal student loans may be repaid in exchange for teaching service. The future teachers conditional scholarship account is created.

Testified For: SBCTC, Commission on Hispanic Affairs, HEC Board

Testified Against: none

Status: Signed into law

Revising HEC Board's policy functions (SHB 3103)

This measure makes the following changes to the HEC Board:

1) The HEC Board's major policy functions are revised in the areas of strategic planning, reviewing higher education budget requests, degree approval, transfer policy, accountability, cost study, higher education data, and collaboration with the K-12 system.

2) The HEC Board no longer has to coordinate activities among all higher education segments, monitor institutions for compliance with state policies or settle disputes among institutions.

3) Every two years, the HEC Board, SBCTC and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board must assess the skills received through a higher education to meet employer demand. They will compare forecasted job openings at each education and training level and what kind of training credentials are needed to match the openings.

4) The HEC Board must make allocations from the State Need Grant in a timely manner and keep track of expenditures to avoid overspending or underspending.

5) The HEC Board must adopt statewide transfer and articulation policies that ensure the efficient transfer of credits and courses. The HEC Board must submit a progress report on transfers to the Legislature by Dec. 1, 2006.

6) A 10-member advisory council is created. Council members represent the State Board of Education, the Workforce Board, community and technical colleges, public research and regional universities, two-year and four-year faculty, private career colleges, and four-year independent colleges. The HEC Board must meet with the advisory council at least quarterly and must seek its advice regarding how the HEC Board handles its responsibilities.

Testified For: Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, HEC Board, SBCTC, WEA, Washington Federation of Teachers, Council of Presidents **With Concerns:** UW Council of Faculty Representatives, CWU Council of Faculty Representatives

Testified Against: none

Status: Delivered to governor

Note: SHB 3103 incorporates **ESSB 6129** by creating a 10-member advisory council, similar in makeup to the council created by ESSB 6129, to meet quarterly with the HEC Board.

Feasibility study of a four-year college in SW Washington (2SSB 5914)

This measure calls for a study on the possible creation of a four-year university with graduate programs in Vancouver. Despite being the fastest-growing region in the state, Southwest Washington doesn't have a four-year college or university.

Testified For: SBCTC, HEC Board, Longview City Council, WSU, Clark College

Testified Against: none

Status: Died in House Rules Committee

Note: This study was put in the supplemental operating budget, but was vetoed by the governor.

Letting colleges consider race in the admissions process (SSB 6268)

This measure allows colleges and universities to consider an applicant's race or national origin when making admissions decisions in order to promote diversity.

In 1998, Washington voters approved Initiative 200, which eliminated racial and gender preferences in public employment, contracting and college admissions. In 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court looked at both undergraduate and law-school admissions at the University of Michigan. The court outlawed the use of a points system that used race but upheld a more "holistic" approach, in which admissions officers consider a candidate's race in conjunction with other factors – such as socioeconomic background, primary language or work experience – that might contribute to the law school's diversity.

Testified For: National Action Network, State Board of Health, UW Council of Faculty Representatives, UW Graduate and Professional Student Senate, Governor's Office, The Evergreen State College, WA State Hispanic Bar Association, ACLU, Centralia College, HEC Board, UW Associated Students

Testified Against: KVI talk-show host John Carlson testified against a similar measure, HB 2700, in the House Higher Education Committee

Status: Died in Senate Judiciary Committee

EDUCATION TRUST FUND PROPOSAL (Initiative 884)

In February, the League of Education Voters unveiled a ballot proposal to raise \$1 billion for education, from preschool to college. The plan would create a new, dedicated funding source called the Education Trust Fund. The proposal would raise state sales tax by 1 cent per dollar.

Of the \$1 billion expected to be raised, \$400 million a year would go to the state's colleges and universities:

- \$250 million to add 25,000 enrollment slots, plus 7,000 slots in high-demand majors such as nursing and engineering;

- \$50 million to increase financial aid, expanding the state's Promise Scholarships and need grants; and

- \$100 million for programs that increase economic development, paying for professors, technology and research labs.